the number and quality of natural communities present. Because of this diversity of species, habitats, and influences, there is a large number of rare plants and animals that are native to the county. Among these are 70 plant species (Appendix 2) and 78 animal species (Appendix 3) that are recognized as rare at the Federal or State level (Amoroso and Finnegan 2002; LeGrand et al. 2001).

New Hanover County ranks 2nd among the 100 North Carolina counties for number of rare animal species, and 11th for number of rare plant species, although some of these plants and animals are known only historically from the county. The rare plants comprise 69 flowering plants and one fern relative (a quillwort). The rare animals comprise four mammals, 15 birds, 15 reptiles, three amphibians, eight fishes, and 31 invertebrates. New Hanover County contains highly significant populations for a number of these rare plants and animals, including some that are globally threatened. Significantly, seven of the nine Federally listed plant and animal species are associated with the barrier island and estuarine ecosystem.

Among the rare plants are Federally and State Endangered roughleaf loosestrife (*Lysimachia asperulifolia*) and Federally and State Threatened seabeach amaranth (*Amaranthus pumilus*). Another 13 rare plants are recognized as Federal Species of Concern due to the apparent limited number of global populations. Among non-federally recognized species, golden crest (*Lophiola aurea*) is listed as State Endangered, and Carolina glasswort (*Lilaeopsis carolinensis*), snowy orchid (*Platanthera nivea*), and dwarf bladderwort (*Utricularia olivacea*) are State Threatened. New Hanover County contains the only documented North Carolina occurrences for swamp-lily (*Crinum americanum*), saltmarsh fingergrass (*Eustachys glauca*), Confederate huckleberry (*Gaylussacia nana*), and Florida scrub frostweed (*Helianthemum nashii*); swamp-lily and saltmarsh fingergrass are known only historically from the county.

The county also contains the only currently known North Carolina populations for ribbed bishopweed (*Ptilimnium costatum*), known historically from Brunswick County. Coastal goldenrod (*Solidago villosicarpa*), currently known globally from four populations in Onslow and Pender counties, is also known historically from New Hanover and Brunswick counties. Another plant known historically from the county, savanna indigobush (*Amorpha georgiana* var. *confusa*), is currently globally restricted to Brunswick and Columbus counties, North Carolina. Carolina bishopweed (*Ptilimnium* species 1) is known globally only from tidal marshes in the Cape Fear and Northeast Cape Fear rivers, and from one river each in South Carolina and Georgia. New Hanover County also contains the population of Pickering's dawnflower (*Stylisma pickeringii* var. *pickeringii*) on which the original scientific description of this species is based. This population is located at 421 Sand Ridge natural area. The following rare plants were first determined to occur in the county during this inventory: Long's bittercress (*Cardamine longii*), globe-fruit seedbox (*Ludwigia sphaerocarpa*), drooping bulrush (*Scirpus lineatus*), lace-lip ladies'-tresses (*Spiranthes laciniata*), and moundlily yucca (*Yucca gloriosa*).

A few of the rare plants listed in Appendix 2 are based on historical specimens that cannot be determined with absolute certainty to have been found in New Hanover County. Frequently, these old records merely state "near Wilmington," a reference that at least occasionally appears to have